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Slovakia

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Situation report on the protection of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic for the purposes of the 3rd round of the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review

I. Preparation of the report at the national level

1. The report was drawn up by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (MFEA SR) based on documents from the competent ministries and institutions in accordance with the guidelines contained in the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Decision 17/119. The report was the subject of a review by the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (Government HRC), which acts as an advisory body to the Government of the Slovak Republic (Government) in the field of human rights. The report underwent a due national approval process and was approved by the Government.

II. Developments in the field of human rights protection and promotion in the Slovak Republic following the second round of the Universal Periodic Review

2. In the period since 2014, which follows the second round of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Slovak Republic (SR) has seen many positive changes in the field of human rights.

3. The National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Violence was approved by the Government on 15 January 2014, and at the same time the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children was established as a separate organisational entity belonging to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR (MLSAF SR). On 11 October 2017, the Government approved an update of the National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Violence.

4. As for prevention and elimination of violence against women, several measures have been adopted in line with the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2014-2019.

5. On 20 November 2014, the Government adopted the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2014-2019 and the Action Plan for Gender Equality 2014-2019.

6. On 18 February 2015, the Government approved the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the SR. The Strategy defines 7 priorities within which specific tasks in the field of human rights were formulated: (i) Analysis of the state of human rights in the SR, (ii) Strengthening institutions that promote and protect human rights in the SR, (iii) Education, training and research in the field of human rights, (iv) Selected systemic measures for the field of judicial and other legal protection, (v) systemic measures for preventing and eliminating barriers to achieving true equality and decent life for all population groups, (vi) Adoption of systematic and comprehensive measures against all forms of intolerance, (vii) Full and systematic utilisation of the SR membership of international human rights organisations with a view to improve human rights promotion and protection.

7. As for the issues of racism, xenophobia and antisemitism, two documents were approved by the Government: the Concept for the Fight against Extremism 2015-2019 and the Action Plan for Preventing and Eliminating Racism, Xenophobia and Antisemitism 2016-2018. On 13 January 2016, the Government approved the Action Plan for Preventing all Forms of Discrimination 2016-2019.

8. The amendment to the Act on upbringing and education (Schools Act) of 2015 provides that pupils with special upbringing and educational needs which result only from their growing up in socially disadvantaged backgrounds are not to be enrolled in special education class, and it further provides that such pupils are to be enrolled in mainstream

classes. Subsequently, it provided for the allowance for pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, so that it meets its purpose, i.e. meets the requirements for providing conditions, content, forms and approaches in upbringing and education necessary for the development of pupils' abilities and personalities, and for attaining adequate education and adequate social inclusion.

9. According to the amendment to the Act on Financing Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Facilities effective from 1 September 2018 until 31 December 2018, pupils who, for the purposes of the allowance for improving conditions of upbringing and education for pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, qualify as pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds also include pupils who are members of households where a household member receives benefits in material need, and their legal guardians can demonstrate this to a school director.

10. The establishment of the Office of the Commissioner for Children and the Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities was an important and positively assessed change. These offices, which act as specialised offices for rights advocates, were established in the SR by the Act on the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities dated 25 June 2015. The so-called Lanzarote Convention, the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse became effective in the SR on 1 July 2016.

11. As part of recasting the civil procedure law, three new codes effective as of 1 July 2016 were adopted: The Code of Civil Dispute Procedure, the Code of Civil Non-Dispute Procedure and the Code of Administrative Procedure. The aim of the new system of procedural rules is to ensure more effective, faster and more cost-efficient proceedings and to create such procedural-legal institutes which will allow us to come as close as possible to the ideal of fast and fair protection of rights and legally-protected interests, assuming a responsible attitude shown by parties to civil proceedings towards court proceedings, and to create conditions for better-quality court decisions and finally, to improve enforcement of rights adjudicated on during court proceedings.

12. The Act on Criminal Liability of Legal Persons effective as of 1 July 2016 introduced direct criminal liability applying to legal persons established for the purpose of committing a crime or otherwise actively engaged in criminal activities which threaten or violate the rights of others (where these are typically cases of exploitation of so-called vulnerable persons, such as women, children, persons from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, foreigners, etc.). The scope of this Act is defined rather broadly, ensuring that an act is treated as criminal according to this Act even when it is so established by an international agreement which was ratified and declared in a manner provided for by the Act and which is legally binding on the SR. Criminal liability of a legal person does not presuppose holding a natural person liable and does not cease upon declaring bankruptcy, entering liquidation, dissolving the legal person or upon initiating receivership, but is transferred onto all legal successors of this legal person, which also applies to unserved sentences.

13. Changes were also made to the Criminal Code (CC) and Code of Criminal Procedure (CP) effective as of 1 January 2017. The aim of the amendment is more effective investigation of crimes of extremism and racially motivated crimes. In view of achieving this aim, the definition of extremist material has been changed. The dictum according to which a material is extremist only if its connection with incitement to hatred, violence and other undesirable phenomena is proven was abandoned. The founding of a movement aimed at the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms has become a criminal offence, not just its support and promotion, as was the case till now. The amendment also makes the definition of racially motivated crime more precise. In order to classify a criminal offence as racially motivated, actual belonging of an individual or persons to a certain race, nation, nationality or ethnic group will no longer be necessary, instead, their assumed belonging to one of these groups will suffice (identity attributed by the perpetrator). The competence to assess such criminal offences and to make decisions on them has been transferred exclusively onto the Special Criminal Court in Pezinok. All such cases have been entrusted to the Special Prosecution Office. Following the aforementioned provision, the Ministry of Justice of the SR (MJ SR) has also extended the set of expert

sections and fields to include an expert section for the field of extremism, as actual experience shows that its absence has been a hindrance to thorough investigation of these criminal offences. The new expert section called Social Sciences and Humanities is divided into two fields: political extremism and religious extremism.

14. The Crime Victims Act (Victims Act), effective as of 1 January 2018 provides for the rights, support and protection of crime victims, the relationship between the state and entities providing assistance to victims, and for financial compensation for victims of deliberate violent crime. It introduces the concepts 'victim', 'particularly vulnerable victim', 'secondary and repeated victimisation' and 'domestic violence crimes' into the legal system. Every person who claims that he or she is a crime victim is considered a victim under this Act until it is proven otherwise or unless it is an apparent case of abuse of the status of victimhood, regardless of whether the perpetrator of the crime has been identified, arrested, faces prosecution or has been convicted. The rights granted by this Act are exercised without any discrimination based on sex, religion or belief, race, belonging to a nationality or ethnic group, health status, age, sexual orientation, colour, political or other opinion, ethnic or social origin, wealth or other status. Entities which, by virtue of their authority or activities, influence or may influence the status or the situation of a victim shall treat victims considerately, professionally, with respect and, as far as possible, charitably, while taking into account their age, sex, health status, including mental health, and mental maturity in a manner which avoids increasing the harm caused to the victim by the crime, as well as secondary victimisation. The Act grants victims the right to be provided professional assistance according to their specific needs and to the extent appropriate to the harm caused by the crime, especially by being provided an adequate explanation of information, legal assistance to exercise their rights, psychological support to lessen the effects of the crime, counselling regarding the risk and prevention of repeated victimisation, intimidation and retaliation. A particularly vulnerable victim has, under the conditions set out in the Act, the right to be provided free assistance, professional psychological emergency intervention, emergency accommodation in a crisis care home, if a particularly vulnerable person faces a direct risk to life or health. A victim also has the right to be protected against secondary or repeated victimisation.

15. The adoption of the Victims Act also resulted in amending the provisions of CC laying down a special motive (§140). In the case of selected criminal offences, having the characteristics of a special motive warrants the use of heavier sentences. The previous provisions related to special motive in §140e established that a criminal offence is committed out of a special motive if it is committed out of hatred towards a group of persons or an individual for their actual or assumed membership of a race, nation, nationality, ethnic group, for their actual or assumed origin, colour, sexual orientation, political opinion or religion. The amendment to the CC also added sex to the definition of a reason for hatred. Changes to the CP extended the principles of criminal proceedings, introduced new provisions for informing obligations in relation to an aggrieved person and witness, strengthened the position of an aggrieved person (victim) in criminal proceedings and laid down the conditions of conducting interrogation taking into account the needs of victims, especially children, and finally, restricted the use of the instrument of confrontation.

III. Implementation of recommendations addressed to the Slovak Republic as part of the second round of the universal periodic review

16. In the second round of the UPR the SR received 146 recommendations, rejecting 13 and only partially rejecting 5. As the individual parts of the report presented below imply, the SR is implementing all the other recommendations. The recommendations are grouped into chapters according to the topic areas they cover.

A. Fight against racism and extremism and racially motivated crimes (recommendations No. 36, 40, 42, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 55, 57-61, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 92-96, 122)

17. Crimes of extremism are: the crime of establishing, supporting and promoting a movement leading to the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms, expressing affinity to a movement leading to the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms, producing extremist materials, keeping extremist materials, denying and approving of the holocaust, the crimes of political regimes and crimes against humanity, defaming a nation, race or belief, inciting hatred towards a nationality, race or ethnic group, apartheid and discrimination against a group of persons, and crimes committed out of hatred towards a group of persons or an individual for their actual or assumed membership of a race, nation, nationality, ethnic group, for their actual or assumed origin, colour, sex, sexual orientation, political opinion or religion. In the case of certain crimes, the Act states that a heavier sentence shall be used if a perpetrator commits one of these crimes as a public figure.

18. On 1 January 2017, the CC introduced a new fact in issue §424a – Apartheid and discrimination against a group of persons, which transferred discrimination from civil law to criminal law.

19. On 1 January 2017, the agenda of extremist crimes was taken over by the Special Prosecution Office of the General Prosecutor's Office of the SR (Special Prosecution Office). The fact that this criminal law is implemented directly by a GP SR testifies to the level of public interest in detecting and punishing racially motivated crimes. In 2016, 20 known perpetrators of reported crimes were being prosecuted by the prosecution, with the number of accused persons being prosecuted by the Special Prosecution Office reaching 33 on 1 November 2017. In addition to performing direct prosecution oversight of preparatory proceedings to ensure their lawfulness is maintained, the prosecutors of the Special Prosecution Office also participate in preparing OSCE training programmes on hate crimes for prosecutors and judges, as well as for members of the Police Force of the SR (PF).

20. The amendment to the CC and the CP, effective from 1 January 2017, resulted in changes aimed at more effective investigation of racially motivated crimes. The amendment also made the definition of racially motivated crime more precise. In order to classify a criminal offence as racially motivated, actual belonging of an individual or persons to a certain race, nation, nationality, ethnic group, etc. will no longer be necessary; instead, their assumed belonging to one of these groups will suffice (identity attributed by the perpetrator). In general, if a perpetrator's hatred towards his or her victim is due to actual or assumed identity of the victim under the provision on special motive, (§140e), this is deemed as a circumstance warranting the use of a heavier sentence.

21. On 5 March 2014, the General Prosecutor of the SR issued an instruction to modify the procedure followed by prosecutors authorised to implement the agenda of racially motivated crimes, crimes of extremism and spectator violence. The instruction is published on the GP SR website and is known to the general public. Annual work meetings organised by the GP SR also helped increase the level of professional competence of prosecutors working in the assessed field. Their purpose was to inform prosecutors of the current problems of application practice, as well as of significant court decisions in the field of racially motivated crimes, crimes of extremism and spectator violence.

22. The positions of senior officer for work in communities have been set up at the section for socially excluded groups at local police force departments within the PF since 2003. There are currently 290 such positions at 117 local police departments of the PF.

23. The Ministry of Interior of the SR (MI SR) launched the campaign of a project co-financed by the European Commission called Effective Monitoring, Investigation and Countering of Violent Extremism in Cyberspace (EMICVEC) consisting of several stages:

(a) "Let's not allow Slovakia to turn brown": On 9 September 2016, the online editions of several daily newspapers were released in old brown colour to mark the occasion of the Holocaust and Racial Violence Victims Commemoration Day, serving as a

reminder of the role of the media in shaping public opinion and in breaking down stereotypes in how minorities are perceived;

(b) The "Protinenávisti.sk" (against hatred) website: contains advice and tools on how not to be defeated by "majority opinion", as well as answers to the most common hoaxes and myths about minorities.

24. In order to fight extremism and following the changes of the criminal codes, the National Counter-Terrorism Unit was created within the competence of the National Criminal Agency of the Presidium of the PF in 2017 consisting of 4 branches, Bratislava, the West, the Centre and the East, in addition to the Extremism Screening Centre. Staff at the Extremism Screening Centre of the National Counter-Terrorism Unit actively monitor extremist organisations in the entire cyberspace. The Extremism Screening Centre performs all tasks contained in The Concept for the Fight against Extremism for the 2015–2019 period.

25. The PF pays attention to each reported case of violence, reviews each case individually and implements it according to the applicable legislation. Enshrined in §1 CP is a general obligation of law enforcement authorities and courts to proceed at each individual stage of criminal proceedings in such a way as to fulfil the subject of the law, i.e. to adequately detect criminal offences and to justly punish perpetrators on the one hand, and to respect fundamental human rights and freedoms of physical persons and legal persons throughout proceedings on the other. Prompt, impartial and efficient investigation is one of the basic principles of criminal proceedings.

26. The Sered' Holocaust Museum was opened in the town of Sered' in 2016 as part of the Slovak National Museum – Museum of Jewish Culture, involved in educational activities and programmes aimed at preventing expressions of antisemitism, racism, extremism a radicalisation in the society.

27. The Museum of the Slovak National Uprising in Banská Bystrica implements an educational programme entitled "Ethnic Cleansing, Genocide and Racial Intolerance in History", which also reflects on modern expressions of racism, Neo-Nacism and xenophobia.

28. Implementation of the first part of the Theatre against Extremism project, organised by the Slovak National Theatre in 2016 in cooperation with the Bratislava Self-Governing Region, was a major project in the fight against discrimination and racism. The aim of the project was to create two mini stage plays with the topic of racism, extremism, holocaust, totalitarianism, and to draw young theatre-goers' attention to humanity, humanism, democracy, tolerance and knowledge of historical context.

B. Fight against human trafficking and assistance to victims (recommendations No. 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86)

29. The Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention of the MI SR (IC MI SR), the Section for Crime Prevention of the Office of the Minister of the Interior (SCP OMI) and Departments of Communication and Prevention at Regional Directorates of the PF deal with preventive activities focused on the fight against human trafficking. The National Unit for Fighting Illegal Migration at the Office of the Border and Foreign Police of the Presidium of the PF (NUFIM) is a specialised unit dealing with detecting and investigating crimes of human trafficking since 1 July 2013. Since the inclusion of the issues of human trafficking in the structure of the NUFIM, the SR has seen a gradual increase in the number of cases of human trafficking, in the number of initiated criminal proceedings, as well as an increased number of identified victims of human trafficking and criminals convicted of these crimes.

30. The implementation of campaigns focused on preventing human trafficking continued in the 2014–2017 period. A schedule of training courses was created, focusing on increasing the level of professional competence of both government and non-government entities. Staff at IC MI SR give lectures at schools, and for children in children's care homes, who are a group at risk in terms of human trafficking. The MI SR also launched the

GIFT BOX Slovakia – People Are Not for Sale campaign, and organised a film festival to mark the occasion of the European Day Against Human Trafficking, where a collection of short films presented forms of modern slavery. The SR also participated in the "HESTIA – Preventing Human Trafficking and Sham Marriages – a Multidisciplinary Solution" project, financed by the EU. To mark the occasion of the European Day Against Human Trafficking, the SCP OMI has been organising the "Marathon against Human Trafficking" since 2015, intended for secondary school students, who are shown the most common forms of exploitation in the SR (sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced begging) through short stage plays.

31. The IC MI SR is in charge of the Programme of Support and Protection for Victims of Human Trafficking. A victim is understood as citizen of the SR, an EU citizen or a citizen of a third country who is justifiably suspected to have become a victim of human trafficking in the SR. The aim of the programme is to provide assistance to human trafficking victims, ensure protection of their fundamental human rights, freedoms and dignity, and to encourage victims to give witness statements allowing law enforcement authorities to detect, prosecute and convict perpetrators of human trafficking. Regarding the implementation of the programme, the MI SR has signed contracts on providing assistance to human trafficking victims with non-governmental organisations, the Slovak crisis centre DOTYK and the Slovak Catholic Charity. The NUFIM cooperates with the International Organisation for Migration in Bratislava as necessary.

32. The procedure for identifying victims in the SR and their possible inclusion in the programme is set out in the National Referral Mechanism. The main objective is to ensure respect for victims' human rights and effective availability of services to be provided to them. As its secondary effect, it may help develop national policies and procedures related to victims, such as the legislation applied to the legalisation of their stay and resettlement, their compensation and provision of protection. This Mechanism institutionalises cooperation between government and non-government entities. Its structure at the highest level consists of the national coordinator for the field of human trafficking, representatives of government authorities, representatives of local authorities and non-governmental/international organisations in the Expert Group for the Field of Human Trafficking, as well as ad hoc working groups dealing with specific problems concerning victims. Any government authority entity, or an international or non-governmental organisation, as well as the victim himself can identify a potential victim by calling the National Helpline for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings at +421 800 800 818.

33. The National Programme for Combating Human Trafficking for the 2011-2014 period and the National Programme for Combating Human Trafficking for the 2015-2018 period contain the National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking. The objective of the Programme for the 2015-2018 period is to ensure a comprehensive and effective fight against human trafficking that supports the development of coordinated activities of all stakeholders to reduce risks and prevent crimes of human trafficking, while creating conditions for providing assistance to human trafficking victims and for ensuring protection of their human rights, freedoms and dignity, taking account of gender-related aspects.

34. Based on the requirements of application practice, the internal procedure for child social and legal protection institutions and social probation institutions in applying measures for victims of human trafficking is laid down in the internal standard "Implementation of Measures of Socio-legal Protection of Children and Social Care for Victims of Human Trafficking – Guidelines and Recommended Procedure No. 6-3/2016", effective from 1 November 2016. In working with human trafficking victims, an authority of socio-legal protection of children and social care proceeds according to the Family Act, which imposes an obligation upon the authority, as part of measures to be applied, to apply or ensure the application of professional methods to assist children or adult physical persons who were victims of human trafficking. When applying these measures, an authority of socio-legal protection of children and social care cooperates with the police, courts, schools, municipalities, accredited entities, health institutions, and with other legal and physical persons engaged in this field.

C. Functioning of courts (recommendations No. 87, 88, 89, 90, 91)

35. The MJ SR takes measures towards strengthening an independent judicial system. Changes were introduced through the amendment of the Act on Judges and Assistant Judges, effective from 1 July 2017, whose aim is a faster and well-functioning judiciary.

36. The Judicial Council of the SR is a constitutional body of judicial legitimacy. The amendment to the Act on Judges and Assistant Judges resulted in a change regarding nominations of members of the Judicial Council by the government, the parliament and the president. These should typically nominate a person who is not a judge. A balance between judges and non-judges in the Judicial Council and ensuring its apolitical nature is one of the conditions of proper functioning of the Judicial Council and, ultimately, the entire judiciary.

37. Other changes include new legislation introducing and specifying the process of selecting judges. The purpose of this change is to eliminate the slow process of filling vacant judges' positions. It introduced so-called collective selection processes for filling vacant judges' positions. They are based on the principle of regions and are conducted in all eight regions of the SR on the same day. The outcome of a selection process results in a list of candidates for judges' positions who will be ready to fill vacant judges' positions after undergoing the required checks performed by the National Security Authority and after completing preparatory training. This measure will allow faster and more flexible replacement of judicial personnel capacities at individual courts, which can ultimately shorten court proceedings. Collective selection processes will take place at least once a year. The first collective selection process took place on 27 November 2017 in Bratislava.

38. Evaluation of the work of judges has also undergone changes. Judges will now be evaluated by professional evaluation committees composed of judges or emeritus judges. A committee from one region will evaluate judges from another region. Evaluations of judges will be published, with repeated negative evaluations still representing serious disciplinary misconduct, as three consecutive negative evaluations may result in disciplinary action against the given judge with the possibility of cancellation of his position.

39. Oversight performed by the Judicial Council has been introduced for disciplinary proceedings against judges to ensure their smooth progress. The Judicial Council has been authorised to act if delays in disciplinary proceedings occur. The common goal of the aforementioned changes is to achieve an independent and well-functioning judiciary.

40. Based on an agreement signed between the SR and the Council of Europe, the subject of which is an audit of the Slovak judiciary to be performed by CEPEJ (The European Commission for Efficiency of Justice) as part of the "Efficiency and Quality of the Slovak Judicial System" project, an analysis of the Slovak judiciary has been underway since April 2017. The subject of the agreement also includes proposals for addressing identified shortcomings, assistance in developing an analytical centre to be set up at the MJ SR and introduction of court management at selected courts. Using objective criteria, the cooperation project with CEPEJ should arrive at a "diagnosis" of the Slovak judiciary and help address shortcomings in an effective way. The outcome should be an efficiently functioning judicial system that will better serve its citizens.

D. The right to work and to fair and satisfactory working conditions (recommendations No. 102, 103, 104, 105)

41. The right to access to employment is provided for in the Act on Employment Services. A citizen has the right to choose employment freely and work anywhere in the SR, or can choose to work abroad. In accordance with the Labour Code women and men are entitled to the same pay for the same work or for work of the same value. Under the Act on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination (Anti-Discrimination Act), sexual harassment at workplaces is prohibited.

42. The Government has for a long time strived to protect and ensure decent working conditions meeting European standards. In order to protect decent work conditions, it has for a long time pursued an adequate minimum wage increase, which helps increase living

standards, contributes to the fight against poverty and helps raise overall salary rates within the national economy. As part of providing employment services in accordance with the Act on Employment Services, the priority is to respond to the needs of disadvantaged groups of job candidates on the labour market. The problem of addressing long-term unemployment is the focus of the Action Plan for Strengthening the Integration of the Long-Term Unemployed into the Labour Market in the SR, approved by a resolution of the Monitoring Committee of "Human Resources Development" Operational Programme (HR OP) for the 2014–2020 programming period of 25 November 2016. The Act on Social Economy and Social Enterprises approved by the Government on 10 January 2018 is a key reform for strengthening the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market. The adoption of the cross-cutting legislation will create a favourable environment for supporting social enterprises in the social economy, as well as social innovations.

43. The MLSAF SR continuously adopts measures to reduce the salary gap between men and women. One of the most significant ones is an outreach campaign highlighting the ever-shrinking salaries paid to women, in addition to offering advice on the www.kedvyrastiem.sk (when I grow up) website on how to protect against discrimination on the labour market. Another significant measure to reduce the gender pay gap is a gradual minimum wage increase, as women find themselves in low-income jobs more often than men. Another important instrument for increasing employment and income levels for women was the national project "Family and Work" focused on balancing family and work life and on work opportunities for mothers with small children.

44. As for the fight against discrimination, an important and indispensable role is played by social partners by promoting equal treatment, for example through monitoring workplace practices, access to employment, professional training and career progression, as well as through monitoring collective agreements, codes of conduct, research, or through sharing experience and best practice. In line with the principle of equal treatment, discrimination on the grounds of marital or family status, colour, language, political or other opinion, engagement in trade unions, national or social origin, disability, age, wealth, gender or other status is prohibited.

45. The MLSAF SR is preparing a nationwide survey of the occurrence of sexual harassment at workplaces. Results should be available in 2018. Labour directorates monitor discrimination on the labour market and review cases of possible discrimination. The preparation of the Methodology for Labour Inspectorates to ensure effective monitoring of cases of discrimination is underway.

46. 13 measures were implemented based on the action plan for the field of employment in 2016. In 2017, in order to improve incentivising measures for disadvantaged groups, the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities signed, on behalf of the MI SR, the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the Field of Increasing Employability and Employment of Members of Marginalised Roma Communities with the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR. One of its objectives is cooperation in mobilising engagement of individual target groups form marginalised Roma communities in various national projects with a special focus on the projects financed from priority axis 2 HR OP – Initiative to Support Youth Employment. During the 2016–2017 period, the measures were implemented using a wide range of measures at the section for education by looking for new ways of supporting youth employment, by means of programmes supporting entry onto the labour market, re-training, and by creating conditions for disadvantaged job candidates to enter the labour market through social economy entities.

E. The right to an adequate standard of living (recommendations No. 106, 107, 137)

47. The human right to safe drinking water and hygiene is implemented in the SR on the basis of four conditions defined at the UN level: affordability, sufficiency, quality and accessibility. The SR has a sufficient number of water resources used for supplying the

population with drinking water from the public supply network. The share of population supplied with drinking water is 92.6%.

48. As part of the programming process for the 2014–2020 period, the HR OP includes definitions of specific measures in the field of housing policy for improving access to drinking and non-potable water for municipalities with marginalised Roma communities.

49. The Quality of Environment OP includes support for restoring key water treatment plants and bolstering their capacity. The support from the Environmental Fund leads to gradual additional construction of water supply networks in the whole country, with further support provided to address local problems with the quality of supplied water.

50. The Rural Development Programme of the SR for the 2014–2020 period also supports the construction, restoration, modernisation and completion of water supply networks along with well deepening in villages.

51. The upcoming call by the MI SR within the HR OP focusing on completing the basic technical infrastructure of urban Roma settlements, as well as another call focusing on Improved Forms of Housing for Municipalities with Marginalised Roma Communities with Elements of Transitional Housing are further instruments to implement the measures aimed at ensuring access to drinking water.

52. In 2017, within the scope of the effort to ensure protection of public health in marginalised Roma communities, the MI SR announced a call focused on constructing or completing a waste separation and municipal waste collection system, and on work to clear illegal landfills, including the elimination of the adverse effects of illegal landfills.

53. Supporting incomes, access to employment, education and integration into the labour market, access to public services and development of human capital, in the case of individuals and socially excluded groups or groups at risk of social exclusion on the one hand, and in the case of policy-makers and service providers on the other, are considered to be the key measures used by the SR to ensure sustainable reduction of poverty and elimination of social exclusion. The Government has for a long time strived to protect and ensure decent working conditions meeting the European standards. In order to protect decent work conditions, it has for a long time pursued an adequate minimum wage increase, which helps increase living standards, contributes to the fight against poverty and helps raise overall salary rates within the national economy. As part of providing employment services in accordance with the Act on Employment Services, the priority is to respond to the needs of disadvantaged groups of job candidates on the labour market. The problems of addressing long-term unemployment are the focus of the Action Plan for Strengthening the Integration of the Long-Term Unemployed into the Labour Market in the SR, approved on 25 November 2016.

F. The right to health (recommendations No. 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113)

54. The current legislation in the SR allows healthcare professionals to apply a conscientious objection. Applying the conscientious objection allows a person to fully exercise the right to freedom of conscience and personal belief regarding the protection of an unborn child by a healthcare professional. It is laid down in the Act on the Provision of Healthcare Services and the Act on the Healthcare Providers, Health Workers and Professional Organisations in the Health Service. The right of a healthcare professional to apply the conscientious objection is further explicitly provided for in the Code of Ethics for Healthcare Professionals, which forms Annex 4 to the Act on Healthcare Providers, Health Workers and Professional Organisations in the Health Service.

55. The problems of reproductive health are also dealt with by the National Programme for the Care of Children and Adolescents, whose aim is to ensure optimum care for pregnant women and newborns. It includes both the effort and successful implementation of measures to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates, as well as improvement of the health status of new-born infants by providing equal access to health care, including family planning with an emphasis on Roma communities and other disadvantaged population

groups. In order to protect the health and life of unborn children, the SR promotes the use of *in utero* medical procedures.

56. All women in Slovakia have sufficient access to contraception methods. According to the data from the database of registered medicines at the State Institute for Drug Control, there are currently 387 types of hormonal contraceptives and 13 types of topical contraceptives registered in the SR that healthcare providers can prescribe to women. These contraceptives along with other forms of contraception are not covered by public health insurance, although in cases where their use is medically justified, they may be covered by a healthcare insurer from public health insurance. Condoms are freely available for sale at retail outlets.

57. As part of its efforts to improve access to healthcare gynaecology and obstetrics wards for marginalised Roma women, the Ministry of Health of the SR (hereafter as "MH SR") is preparing a pilot scheme within the Healthy Communities project to create health education assistant positions in hospitals (i.e. at gynaecology and obstetrics wards). Health education assistants are all employees from among the Roma population who are continuously educated in the field of healthcare and reproductive health. They are a key element in breaking down social barriers to providing healthcare to Roma minorities. Health education assistants will identify and link special needs of Roma women on the hand with the requirements of medical staff on the other, with an emphasis on an intercultural approach. This will allow the monitoring of possible signs of segregation of Roma women in providing healthcare.

G. Abuse of power by a public official and police assaults (recommendations No. 13, 57, 58, 59, 60, 94, 95, 96)

58. Reports of alleged inhumane treatment or use of violence against arrested, detained or accused persons by members of the PF are duly examined and investigated by an investigator or an authorised member of the PF of the Office of Inspection Service of the Section of Control and Inspection Service of the MI SR regardless of sex, race or ethnic origin of the aggrieved persons.

59. Oversight of preparatory proceedings to ensure their lawfulness before instituting a prosecution is provided by a prosecutor. Every decision made by an authorised member of the PF in a given matter can be examined by prosecution.

60. Resolution No. 650/2015 of the Government set the following task: "to pay sustained attention to the activities of the Section of Control and Inspection Service of the MI SR in its investigation of reports submitted by arrested, detained or accused persons regarding injuries which they claim were caused to them by members of the PF, to record information about such problems in reports on the criminality of members of the PF, and to submit it for negotiations of the Government annually by 30 April". On 20 March 2017, based on the task it received, the Section of Control and Inspection Service of the MI SR produced the "Report on the Criminality of Members of the PF in 2016".

61. Members of the PF are regularly retrained on the provisions of the Act of the PF, the Regulation of the Minister of the Interior of the SR on the Code of Ethics for Members of the PF, as well as the European Convention on the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Increased attention is also paid to the behaviour of members of the PF during service interventions against persons and measures are taken to address the shortcomings and causes of their occurrence. Based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the MI SR and the OSCE ODIHR on 14 September 2017, the MI SR covers the implementation of ODHIR education in the context of the SR for members of the PF regarding hate crimes.

62. In its manifesto for the 2016–2020 period, the Government made a commitment to advance the institutional strengthening of the control activities of armed police units and the creation of conditions to set up a dedicated section of the prosecution that will oversee the prosecution of members of the PF for committing criminal offences. As for internal order and security, it also made a commitment to strengthen the authority of the Defence and

Security Committee of the National Council of the SR in terms of oversight to ensure members of armed units maintain the lawfulness of their actions.

63. The SR is regularly visited by the European Committee to prevent torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, with the focus on examining the treatment of imprisoned persons in order to strengthen their protection against torture or degrading treatment or punishment.

H. The rights of persons belonging to national minorities (recommendation No. 116, 117, 118, 119, 120)

64. In 2015, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities (OPGSRNM), in cooperation with the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups and with the participation of representatives of national minorities, prepared a draft of the Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the 2016–2020 period. The objective identified in the Action Plan is to ensure an efficient, transparent and reliable system for protecting and promoting the rights of people belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, which includes ensuring more robust institutional resources for the system. This objective was developed into seven operational objectives. The first operational objective will include, among other measures, performing an analysis of the possibilities to use temporary countervailing measures in preventing discrimination against persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups. A methodology for adoption of temporary countervailing measures in the field of the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups will be designed, including the creation of standards, models and measures for the implementation of temporary countervailing measures.

65. The OPGSRNM promotes elements of informal education within the individual sub-programmes of the Culture of National Minorities Subsidy Programme. For example, in 2017, the programme supported research in mother tongue teaching, thematic events for primary and secondary schools students focused on improving the standard of using the language of the Hungarian national minority, as well as the organisation of a symposium in the field of sociolinguistics, mother tongue methodology and translatology focused on language education in a national minority language.

66. The Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups is a permanent body of the Government HRC. Among other things, it acts as a consulting body for matters related to the participation of national minorities and ethnic groups in the conduct of affairs related to national minorities and ethnic groups under Article 34, paragraph 2c, of the Constitution of the SR. 13 national minorities are represented in the Committee (Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian, Czech, Ukrainian, German, Polish, Moravian, Russian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Jewish and Serbian).

67. On 25 August 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR (MESRS SR) approved the new Framework Curriculum for primary schools with a national minority language as the language of instruction, valid from 1 September 2016. It increases the number of lessons for the national minority language and literature subject in primary education from 21 to 24, with the number of lessons dedicated to a national minority language up from 5 to 8.

68. The amendment to the decree of the Government which lays down the details of the breakdown of financial resources from the national budget for schools and school facilities, effective from 1 January 2018, increased normative funding for primary schools with a language of instruction other than Slovak from 108% to 113% of the corresponding normative funding, and introduced new normative funding for primary schools where a national minority language is taught at 104% of the corresponding normative funding.

69. In 2017, the MESRS SR launched the IKATIKA pilot project. The aim of the project was to provide access to digital educational content for kindergartens and grade zero of primary schools. The work included organising training courses, publishing a methodological handbook and examining bilingual digital technologies and interactive

methods in education. 30 kindergartens and primary schools with children from mixed language backgrounds and children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds were involved in the project. Due to its success, the MESRS SR plans to continue with the project.

70. The subsidy programme of the Office of the Government entitled the Culture of National Minorities, with the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities acting as its guarantor, has been an important instrument of supporting activities to eliminate and prevent discrimination till January 2018. The funds of the subsidy programme were mainly used to support the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities, education and training regarding the rights of national minorities, and to support interethnic and intercultural dialogue, as well as understanding between the national majority and national minorities and ethnic groups.

71. The Act on the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities establishing a new public institution became effective on 1 July 2017. The aim of the project was to transform the previous subsidy system of the OG SR and create an institution which ensures effective and systematic promotion of cultural and arts activities of all national minorities in the SR, which is administratively independent of central government authorities, and represented by experts from all national minorities. The law lays down the calculation of the proportion of funding allocated to the individual expert boards expressed as a percentage share. The purpose of the Fund is the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities, education and training regarding the rights of national minorities, and the development and support of intercultural dialogue and understanding between citizens belonging to the Slovak majority and citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in Slovakia.

72. The Culture of Disadvantaged Groups subsidy programme, which allows the fulfilment and development of the needs of persons with disabilities and otherwise disadvantaged population groups, is an effective instrument of promoting social inclusion and cohesion that has worked for a long time. The sum of EUR 375,000 was distributed every year during the 2014-2016 period as part of the Culture of Disadvantaged Groups subsidy programme, whose guarantor is the Ministry of Culture of the SR. The sum of EUR 980,000 has been available for allocation within the Culture of Disadvantaged Groups subsidy programme since 2017.

I. Implementation of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the Integration of Roma until 2020 (recommendations No. 121, 122, 123, 124)

73. On 22 February 2017, the Government adopted new, updated action plans for the Strategy of the SR for the Integration of Roma until 2020 for the 2016-2018 period for the fields of education, employment, health, housing, and a new action plan for the field of financial inclusion. On 13 September 2017, the Government approved new action plans of this strategy for the fields of non-discrimination and the fields of approaches directed at the majority society – Initiative of Roma Integration through Communication. The amount of public funds planned for 2017 for these action plans totals EUR 136,171,438.42.

74. The system of financial instruments which secures funds from government loans was used to complete a call providing financial instruments at the section of transitional housing and micro-loan programmes for DIY construction of housing, and to launch a national project called "Support of the Settlement of Land Ownership in Marginalised Roma Communities". As for legislation, there was an amendment to the Act on Land Conversion, Settlement of Land Ownership, Land Register Offices, the Slovak Land Fund and Land Communities, and an amendment to the Decree on Determining the General Value of Property. Individual national projects implemented by the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities (OPGSRRC) within the European solidarity assistance co-financing system have a direct impact on creating employment opportunities for the Roma, including those engaged in

public service and in the implementation of these projects, and also track integration and the process of inclusion. The national project "Monitoring and Evaluation of Inclusive Policies and Their Impact on Marginalised Roma Communities" focuses on a comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation of inclusive policies. A decision based on a previous call entitled "Support of a Comprehensive System of Monitoring, Evaluation and Data Collection on Inclusive Policies Focused on the Socio-Economic Living Conditions of the Roma Population", particularly of marginalised Roma communities, has been effective since 23 October 2017. The last monitoring report for 2016 was approved by the Government in 2017. In accordance with Resolution No. 87 of the Government of 22 February 2017, the evaluation of the strategy is scheduled to be completed by 30 June 2019 and by 30 June 2021. This system also contains plans of comprehensive engagement of non-governmental entities in the evaluation process, in the same way this element was also engaged in the preparation process from the outset and is engaged in the process of implementing the strategy.

75. Education of members of the PF in the field of human rights and elimination of expressions of extremism with respect to the Roma national minority is in the plan of the main tasks of the MI SR for 2018 and in the action plan for non-discrimination, approved by the Government in 2017. The OPGSRRC cooperates in this field with the Council of Europe Directorate General for Roma Issues and with ODIHR OSCE.

76. The educational programme called the "Specificities of the Service of a Senior Officer for Work in Communities" was accredited at the Secondary Vocational School of the PF in Košice in 2017.

77. On 14 November 2017, the Minister of the Interior of the SR, in cooperation with the OPGSRRC, issued a measure regarding a working group for addressing the problems of socially excluded groups. This working group will work under the authority of the Vice-President of the PF and will link the key organisational elements of the MI SR and the PF at the section for public administration, the EU solidarity assistance, integration of Roma communities and social work, implementation of national projects, economic and material resources, with the aim to also produce comprehensive solutions in the field of prevention and elimination of the occurrence of hate speech and hate crimes. The objective of the work of OPGSRRC will be to advance substitution solutions in conflict situations if there are negative reactions due to concentrated poverty.

78. In addition to the Implementation of the Strategy of the SR for the Integration of the Roma until 2020, the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia (CBS) set up a separate CBS coordinator position for assisting in pastoral work for the Roma, in order to contribute to eliminating discrimination against any minority, encourage and educate Roma women and men and participate in educating all children without distinction. The Catholic Church in the SR works with marginalised Roma communities and assists in their education and inclusion in the society also through education in financial literacy, reading literacy, health and employment. Through the pastoral work of priests in several hundreds of parishes with a high proportion of Roma population, they carry out a whole host of joint activities (pilgrimages, seminars, meetings, network building, expert groups) for the Roma and Slovaks, in order to help eradicate negative stereotypes about the Roma.

J. Access to education for the Roma (recommendations No. 114, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 142)

79. The rights established by the Schools Act are guaranteed equally for everyone in line with the principle of equal treatment in education established by anti-discrimination legislation. Roma children and pupils in the school upbringing and education system of the SR have an equal status with the same guaranteed rights as all children and pupils.

80. The Act on Financing Primary and Secondary Schools and School Facilities was amended to ensure better access to kindergarten education for children from marginalised Roma communities. As of 1 January 2018, an allowance is provided to partially cover the costs of upbringing and education of children attending kindergartens within the network of schools who are a year away from commencing compulsory education or are members of

households where a household member receives benefits in material need, and their legal guardians can demonstrate this to a school director. This has extended the category of claimants who qualify for the allowance for the upbringing and education of kindergarten children, as legal guardians are now exempt from contributions to partially cover costs. The aim of this legislation was to eliminate the problems seen in application practice in accepting these children into kindergartens.

81. The MESRS SR provides important support in this field through the European Social Fund on the basis of HR OP, which is focused on supporting education, employment, social inclusion and vulnerable groups on the labour market. The national project called "School Open to All" was launched within the HR OP Education priority axis on 1 February 2016, with planned duration of 46 months and EUR 29,877,073.16 of funds to be allocated. The primary aim of the project is to ensure equal access to quality education and to improve the results and competencies of kindergarten children and primary school pupils by supporting inclusive education and by enhancing professional competencies of pedagogical and vocational staff. The creation of local desegregation plans at 130 primary schools is an important part of the project. Further, on 30 December 2016, as part of the Education priority axis within the HR OP, a demand-focused call was announced for applications for a non-repayable financial contribution called "More Success at Primary School", with EUR 50 million available for allocation. The call is aimed at supporting inclusion at primary schools through the work of teaching assistants, pedagogical staff and inclusion teams (consisting of a school psychologist, special education teacher and social teacher).

82. With the introduction of an amendment to the Schools Act, the state's control mechanism for upbringing-related counselling and prevention has become stricter. Subsequently, in the academic year 2015–2016, the State School Inspection (SSI) carried out 12 thematic inspections to examine the standard of professional services at school facilities providing upbringing-related counselling and prevention services. The MESRS SR received a recommendation from the chief inspector of schools in accordance with the applicable regulations, following which it made a decision to exclude Dad, Mum and Me – the Private Centre for Special Pedagogy Counselling with its registered office at Uzovské Pekľany 67, along with its External Facility in Prešov, part of Dad, Mum and Me – the Private Centre for Special Pedagogy Counselling with its registered office at Uzovské Pekľany 67, from the network of schools and school facilities as of 31 May 2016. The MESRS SR also excluded the Private Special Primary School with registered address at Rokycany 40, along with the following external facilities belonging to the school: External Office at Rokycany 46, part of the Private Special Primary School with its registered office at Rokycany 40, External Office in Šarišské Michaľany, part of the Private Special Primary School with its registered office at Rokycany 40, and External Office at Žehňa 22, from the network of schools and school facilities as of 1 September 2017.

83. Due to the restructuring of the diagnostics system, an amendment to the Act on State Administration in Education and Local School Administration effective from 1 September 2017 was adopted. School facilities providing upbringing-related counselling and prevention services will continue to be included in the network of schools and school facilities until 31 December 2018.

84. In 2016, EUR 1,545,037.42 of funds were allocated for measures as part of fulfilling the updated action plan for the field education within the Strategy of the SR for the Integration of the Roma. Likewise, OPGSRRC's subsidy scheme provided a subsidy for the Roma Education Fund to Promote Tutoring and Mentoring foundation. A project proposal of a national project entitled Promotion of Pre-Primary Education of Children from Marginalised Roma Communities, to be implemented by the OPGSRRC, was approved in 2017.

85. In 2018, the system of cooperation between the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities and the MI SR includes plans to announce a call for projects to receive a non-repayable financial contribution focusing on the "Provision of Scholarships to Secondary School Students to Raise the Standard of Education among Members of Marginalised Communities", especially the Roma.

K. Settlement of ownership of land under Roma dwellings (recommendations No. 139, 140, 141)

86. In 2017, the Act on Land Conversion, Settlement of Land Ownership, Land Register Offices, the Slovak Land Fund and Land Communities was amended to allow carrying out simple land conversions, including conversions of what was originally agricultural land, with compensation to be offered to its owners either in the form of housing land or money. An amendment to the Decree of the MJ SR on Determining the General Value of Property allows determining the price of land in clustered settlements with dwellings occupied mostly by spatially or socially excluded population groups.

87. The OPGSRRC implemented pilot projects focused on settling property and land ownership. It managed to settle ownership of land where Roma dwellings had been built in the villages of Čierny Balog, Studienka and Tichý Potok. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the SR, State Forests of the SR and the Slovak Land Fund set up a working group focused on settling land ownership and land legalisation.

88. A project called "Promotion of Land Ownership in Marginalised Roma Communities" has been implemented since 2017. The project provides assistance to municipalities in the process of settling ownership of land where clustered settlements inhabited by marginalised Roma communities have been built. The objective is to support the settling of ownership of land under Roma dwellings in Roma settlements focusing on improving hygiene standards in marginalised Roma communities and on systematic reduction of the number of illegal housing with extremely low hygiene standards. The OPGSRRC continues to liaise with the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the SR (MTC SR) in setting up the relevant instruments for territorial planning and for post-completion approvals of constructions in the process of drafting new codes of practice at the section of territorial planning and construction.

89. As for forced evictions, the MTC SR has no knowledge of any construction project proposals that would directly threaten the homes of members of marginalised communities or members of Roma communities in particular, and certainly not in a way that would put them at direct risk of losing their homes. There is no such applicable legal regulation that would permit a construction whose primary purpose is segregation of a certain population group.

90. Those so-called "anti-Roma" walls or fences were not approved by government authorities (the construction office) as segregation walls. If it is shown after the completion of a construction that its existence demonstrably precludes a population group from exercising its statutory rights and freedoms, thereby segregating such a population group, the Slovak legal system allows the affected population group to protect itself by reporting the case to the prosecution or by filing a complaint at a civil court. The affected population group can therefore claim its rights by obtaining a court decision ordering the removal of such a segregative construction.

91. Since 2013, the OPGSRRC has repeatedly launched pilot projects of "DIY Construction of Rental Family Housing". The aim of creating the system of DIY construction was to achieve greater involvement of the Roma themselves in transforming Roma settlements, which cuts constructions costs. Another anticipated positive result was that the Roma could learn work skills that would increase their employability. These projects mostly involved flats that became municipal property within the system of the Act on Subsidies within the authority of the MI SR, and investment was channelled towards reimbursing the cost of construction materials, testing different models to determine the variation in costs according to the degree of involvement of the Roma in construction. Based on the testing, it was found that the procurement price of such family houses was lower because the cost of DIY labour formed a part of their value, but not a part of their procurement price. In line with the requirements of the Act on Subsidies within the authority of the MI SR, the condition of 10-year project sustainability and disposal prohibition have been built into these pilot projects.

92. In 2016, the Act on Subsidies within the authority of the MI SR allowed the OPGSRRC to begin supporting a project to build systems of transitional housing to aid social mobility and integration of members of marginalised Roma communities.

93. The MTC SR strived to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights in the field of public access to accessible and affordable housing. The current provisions of Act on Territorial Planning and Building Order and the related legal regulations under the authority of the MTC SR guarantee equality and protection of human rights in the field of construction, housing and state support for all citizens of the SR.

L. Migration and asylum policy (recommendations No. 145, 146)

94. Identification of asylum-seeking minors or minors who have been granted international protection in the SR is verified already during the asylum process. If a minor comes from a country with an ongoing armed conflict, his or her application review process should include verification of whether he was involved in the armed conflict.

95. It is also possible to identify asylum-seeking minors who were involved in armed conflict when assessing a minor's vulnerability in accordance with the Act on Asylum. The MI SR creates suitable conditions for accommodation and care of foreigners in asylum facilities. Suitable conditions are understood as taking appropriate measures to prevent attacks and violence, as well as providing protection to victims of human trafficking.

96. If an asylum seeker is identified as a minor who was involved in armed conflict, members of staff at the Migration Office of the MI SR are professionally trained to work with such a group of minors. Since 2014, the Migration Office of the MI SR has not had any cases of asylum-seeking minors who were involved in armed conflict.

97. Asylum seekers and persons who have been granted international protection are guaranteed various rights in the SR. The MI SR covers the cost of urgent medical care for asylum seekers who do not have public health insurance. The MI SR ensures suitable medical care for asylum-seeking minors who are victims of abuse, negligence, exploitation, torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or who have suffered from armed conflict (the Act on Asylum). Medical care for persons who have been granted asylum is covered by public health insurance (the Act on Health Insurance). In the case of a foreigner who has been granted subsidiary protection and does not have public health insurance, the MI SR covers medical care provided in the SR to the extent to which it is covered based on public health insurance (the Act on Asylum).

98. Protection and promotion of the rights of foreigners, i.e. migrants, refugees and applicants for international protection, is provided in the SR by the Centre for Legal Aid under the authority of the MI SR and by non-governmental organisations.

IV. Overview of current implementation of the recommendations from the 2nd round of the universal periodic review, submitted in the middle of the review cycle

99. On 17 November 2017, the SR submitted a document to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights a document entitled "The Current State of the Implementation of the Recommendations Addressed to the SR as Part of the 2nd Round of the UPR, Submitted in the Middle of the Review Cycle".

V. Voluntary pledges and commitments

100. The SR has been a member of the UNHRC since 1 January 2018. For this purpose, the MFEA SR, in cooperation with the materially competent ministries and institutions, prepared a document entitled "Voluntary Pledges and Commitments of the SR at the UNHRC for the 2018–2020 Period", approved by the Government on 5 April 2017. The document contains SR voluntary pledges and commitments at the national and international

levels during its membership of the UNHRC. The priorities of the SR membership will be the fight against all forms of racism and xenophobia, promotion of children's rights and promotion of religion or belief and religious tolerance.